

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Teach for America

**Application ID:** 13ED145132

**Program Name:** Teach For America

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant, a national entity, recruits AmeriCorps members to teach for a period of two years in low-income communities across America. Its educational focus is clearly stated, and its dedicated determination to have AmeriCorps members instruct in the nation's poorest schools where students come from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged families is admirable.

(+) The applicant described how the interventions of the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are either evidence-based or evidenced-informed; such as; to eliminate the achievement gap and address the related socioeconomic factors that widen this gap.

(+) The academic case for support includes appropriate examples of schools provided from the Mississippi Delta region to the urban area of Los Angeles, where in the latter location 75% of the schools are officially listed as failing academically, and in the former, 8<sup>th</sup> graders are on the average three to four years behind their more fortunate counterparts.

(+) It is convincingly argued that students from poor school districts to be served are selected to receive AmeriCorps member teacher assistance because young people who come from poor communities are largely underrepresented and, as a result they do not have access to educational opportunities like others. Students enrolled in the poor-income schools are to be recipients of AmeriCorps members because of the disparity of educational achievement gaps between themselves and their wealthier peers.

(+) An important educational focus of the nonprofit entity, which is described eloquently, is its commitment to ensure that the large cadre of AmeriCorps member teachers recruited across the nation will come from diverse groups of people and contain faculty recruits representative of the wide audiences of students living in disadvantaged situations.

(+) The applicant also specifies that the AmeriCorps investment will help Teach For America (TFA) to increase the size and diversity of the teachers placed in classrooms nationwide. The applicant implies that the educational communities could not offer similar diversity or highly qualified teachers in these areas without the support of the Teach for America program.

- (+) The proposal does a good job of showing the overall scope of why AmeriCorps members are particularly well suited for TFA and how they fit into the current structure.
- (-) There was not enough information included in the application to identify how the organization would accomplish its mission above and beyond the existing staff and/or volunteers.
- (-) The proposal does not explain how professional development will be done for Members, which is a necessary part of being a high-quality teacher.
- (-) The applicant gives general information that TFA teachers will tutor students and engage with student's families but does not provide specific information about programs that will be used or expectations for the amount of time these extra resources will be provided to students.
- (-) There are vague references about the inability of the schools contracted with to be able to afford the array of AmeriCorps services and interventions which are offered by the proposed grant. The lack of data and information on the condition of low-income communities across America does not support the rationale for program support.
- (-) The applicant proposes to serve a multi-state area, however the justification of need only provided general research to justify the need for high-quality teachers in low-income communities.
- (-) General ethnic and economic criteria were identified; however a specific target area(s) was not clearly identified by the applicant.